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Trending@RWULaw

Professor Anthony J. Santoro's Post

We'll Always Need Tax Lawyers...

Posted by Anthony Santoro on 09/08/2014 at 10:59 AM

Taxation!

The mere thought is enough to strike fear into the hearts and minds of law students. Yet a hardy band of RWU grads has found that tax law can offer a promising career path. It does require some extra effort, though. In the years since I returned to full-time teaching, thirty or so of our graduates have moved on to earn LL.M.s in Taxation from some of the best graduate tax programs in the country – B.U., Villanova, Georgetown, Florida and Miami, among others. This fall, two more RWU grads are joining that group.

Applying to an LL.M program can be an anxiety-ridden experience. Tax law is often an interest discovered late in one's educational trajectory, and quite at odds with a student's original career goals. It can demand review and analysis of one's career plan. Moreover, while a graduate degree may expand career opportunities, it does not guarantee a job. And of course, there are family, financial and geographic issues that have to be confronted, not to mention the long wait for the acceptance letter – all while finishing law school, preparing for a bar exam and trying to ferret out long-forgotten information required by state bar authorities.

Nonetheless, the consensus seems to be that the degree is worth the time, money and foregone income. Based on available information, all of the RWU grads I have worked with are gainfully employed. Some are associated with law firms, some with accounting firms, some with corporations. Others have found a comfortable niche in the area of state tax law – two, at least, are working for state agencies and one is with a firm that counsels national corporations on their state sales tax liability. One works for a major publisher of tax materials. Another was recently tapped to teach an online course as part of a graduate tax program. Yet another works in the area of international tax for a corporation.

Benjamin Franklin famously observed that nothing is certain in this world except for death and taxes. This truism means that America will always need its tax lawyers.